

Irish Girl Guides press release
7 March 2017

Irish Girl Guides will not wait another 100 years for gender equality

- Former Supreme Court Judge says today's Girl Guides will be leaders in achieving a 50-50 world –

Women will not reach economic parity with men until 2133 if the current rate of progress continues, according to the World Economic Forum.

The Irish Girl Guides (IGG) say this is not soon enough and are joining the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in calling for transformative change to take place within the current generation of girls and young women.

“Our members are not prepared to wait over 100 years for economic parity,” says IGG Chief Commissioner Helen Concannon. “The current generation of girls needs to see transformative change during their lifetime and, as an organisation, we are committed to making that happen.

“Girl Guides began because a small group of girls turned up to a rally for boys saying they wanted the same opportunities. In the 100 years since, some things have improved in Ireland but not for girls around the world.

“Far too many girls are held back because of harmful norms and gender stereotypes in society. IGG gives girls a safe space where they can develop resilience and leadership skills and the ability to speak up and take action to change their world and the world around them. We aim to create a safer, more equal world for girls and young women everywhere.”

Ms Concannon was speaking ahead of International Women's Day (8 March 2017). This year's theme 'Women in the Changing World of Work: Planet 50-50' throws the spotlight on how to ensure women's economic empowerment in the world of work.

IGG members are sharing on social media their female role models – what makes these women so special and how they inspire them. The wider public is encouraged to share their role models too using the hashtag #GreatGirlLeaders.

Former Supreme Court Judge Catherine McGuinness, who is a former Girl Guide and is currently an ambassador for the organisation, says: “It's great to see Irish Girl Guides taking an active part in International Women's Day. From its very beginnings the Irish Girl Guide movement has encouraged not just equality but also leadership among girls and women.

“The Planet 50-50 in the Changing World of Women at Work is certainly just as relevant here in Ireland as it is on the international scene. We still have a long way to go before we actually stand on that 50-50 planet! I know that today's generation of Irish Girl Guides will be leaders in achieving that 50-50 world.”

Irish Girl Guides welcomes new members from age 5-30 and volunteer leaders from age 18+. For further information, see www.irishgirlguides.ie or tel: 01 6683898.

ENDS

Photo captions:

Members of Zion Brownies, Rathgar, getting ready for International Women's Day by celebrating #GreatGirlLeaders

Contact:

Fiona Murdoch, Communications Officer, Irish Girl Guides. Tel: 085 8570565

Notes for editors:

Irish Girl Guides has approximately 12,000 members. Guiding started in Ireland in 1911 and operates throughout the 26 counties with 1,800 volunteer leaders providing an informal educational programme of fun and challenging activities that foster confidence and leadership skills in girls and young women, enabling them to develop to their full potential and to become responsible citizens. Girls from age 5+ can choose to earn a wide range of badges, including Community Action, Cultural Diversity, Disability Awareness, Drug Awareness, Online Surfer, Science Investigator and Global Traveller.